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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 1998

SECRETARY COHEN ISSUES GUIDANCE TO SERVICES ON KASSEBAUM BAKER PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the 90-day Service review of the Kassebaum Baker Panel recommendations, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen provided new guidance to the Services today for improving basic training in the military.

The actions came following his consideration of the recommendations of the Kassebaum Baker Report and the responses of the Services to that report. Secretary Cohen noted that the members of the panel had been in the forefront of expanding opportunities for women in the military, a position which the Secretary has supported throughout his career. The Secretary also noted the important contribution to the effort made by the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) in surveying views and attitudes of trainers and trainees.

Cohen said the Services responded to the Kassebaum Baker Report by recognizing a number of deficiencies and have agreed to make changes in those areas. These changes include:

- Increase the number of female recruiters.
- Increase the number of female trainers.
- Implement better selection processes for trainers and more clarity in training authority.
- Institute training to produce professional relationships between the genders without use of such expedient gender-based policies as "no talk, no touch."
- Reexamine recruiting advertising to put more emphasis on patriotism and challenge.
- Place greater emphasis on core military values in training.
- Develop more consistent training standards between the genders.

Cohen directed the Services to report back within 30 days with a detailed plan on how each of these steps will be implemented.

But he also said those steps alone were not enough. The Secretary directed additional action in three key areas of basic training:

Leadership. The Secretary directed the Services to develop a system of rewards and incentives that emphasize the value of assignment as a basic trainer and counter any notion that a training assignment is detrimental to a military career. "The crucial task of training can be accomplished only through assignment of the most highly skilled and motivated non-commissioned officers led by experienced, quality officers. We need the best to train the best," Cohen said.

Training Rigor. The Secretary directed the Services to review and toughen their physical fitness standards to "produce fit, disciplined, motivated soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines." He also directed the Services to ensure that their training exercises are realistic, challenging and instructive while also pushing individuals to achieve their maximum potential.

Billeting. The Secretary directed the Services to ensure that male and female basic trainees live in separate areas, if not separate buildings. He also directed that they have after-hours supervision by training professionals and foster an environment free from distractions. "The goal is a basic training system which provides gender privacy and dignity in safe, secure living conditions," he said.

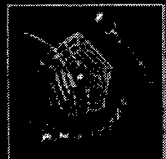
Cohen also directed the Services to report back within 30 days on the steps they will be taking to achieve these three

concrete goals. Once the Services implement corrective measures on all of these deficiencies, he will evaluate the need for further action on altering small-unit gender integration during basic training.

Cohen appointed the Kassebaum Baker Committee in June of last year following a series of problems that raised questions about gender-integrated training. The committee produced 30 recommendations covering the recruiting and training process generally, all of which are addressed by the Secretary's action today.

More information about Gender-Integrated Training is available on DefenseLINK at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/git/index.html>

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